

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MOSCOW 06923 01 OF 20 061926Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----021380 061939Z /42
O 061553Z APR 78 ZFF4
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0080

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 2 MOSCOW 06923

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: UR
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S LUNCH WITH DOBRYNIN

REF: STATE 87939

1. DOBRYNIN WAS HIS USUAL VOLUBLE SELF AT LUNCH TODAY, AND WHILE I FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO GET A WORD IN EDGEWISE, I DID MANAGE TO MAKE THE POINTS WITH REGARD TO YOUR MOSCOW VISIT, SOMALIA, ERITREA, AND SOUTHERN AFRICA.

2. WITH REGARD TO YOUR MOSCOW VISIT, DOBRYNIN SAID THAT THIS COMES AT A CRITICAL POINT IN OUR RELATIONS AND IT IS DOUBLY IMPORTANT TO RECORD PROGRESS ON SALT. HE UNDERSTOOD THE INEVITABILITY OF MENTIONING OUR CONCERN WITH REGARD TO THE HORN AND MIDDLE EAST, BUT HE FELT STRONGLY THAT OUR ATTENTION SHOULD BE HEAVILY FOCUSED ON SALT. HE HAD SEEN BREZHNEV ON THE DAY AFTER HIS ARRIVAL IN MID-MARCH, AND HE COULD ASSURE ME THAT THE LEADERSHIP'S CONCERN ABOUT THE OBJECTIVES AND INTENTIONS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION REMAINS UNALLAYED. BREZHNEV AND HIS COLLEAGUES WERE PARTICULARLY ANGERED BY THE PRESIDENT'S WAKE FOREST ADDRESS WHICH RAISED QUESTIONS IN THEIR MINDS AS TO THE PRESIDENT'S DEDICATION TO DETENTE AND IMPROVEMENT OF RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET

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UNION. I MADE THE APPROPRIATE REJOINDER TO DOBRYNIN'S BLEATS.

3. ON SOMALIA, DOBRYNIN ECHOED THE LINE WHICH HE HAS TAKEN WITH YOU AND SHULMAN IN PAST CONVERSATIONS--NAMELY THAT WE SEEMED MORE IDEOLOGICALLY MOTIVATED ON THE HORN THAN THE SOVIETS THEMSELVES. HE WAS NOT AWARE OF

ETHIOPIAN TROOP CONCENTRATIONS ALONG THE SOMALIA BORDER, SAID HE WOULD REPORT OUR CONCERN TO HIS COLLEAGUES, BUT REMINDED ME OF MENGISTU'S SOLEMN ASSURANCES AGAINST CROSSING THE SOMALIA BORDER. CONCERNING THE CUBAN PRESENCE, DOBRYNIN RATHER SLYLY INTIMATED THAT CUBAN APPARENT UNWILLINGNESS TO REDUCE THEIR TROOP STRENGTH MAY STEM FROM CASTRO'S SHADENFREUDE AT HIS SUCCESS IN CAUSING US CONCERN AND ANNOYANCE. HE POINTED OUT TO ME AS HE HAD IN WASHINGTON THAT IT IS NOT EASY TO ELICIT A POSITIVE RESPONSE ON THE PART OF THE LEADERSHIP TO OUR CONCERNS WITH REGARD TO DEVELOPMENTS IN THE THIRD WORLD AT A TIME WHEN OUR RELATIONS ARE AT A LOW EBB.

4. ON SOUTHERN AFRICA, DOBRYNIN TRIED TO ASSURE ME THAT SOVIET INFLUENCE OVER THE PATRIOTIC FRONT WAS MINIMAL AND THEIR ROLE IN THE REGION HAD BEEN LARGELY REACTIVE. HE SEEMED TO UNDERSTAND THE DANGERS INHERENT IN THE SITUATION BUT GAVE ME LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD OR COULD BE HELPFUL IN BRINGING ABOUT A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION.

5. HE COMPLAINED BITTERLY OF THE DEPARTMENT'S DECLARING MOUNT ALTO A CLOSED AREA AND LABELED THIS AN UNPRECEDENTED DEVELOPMENT IN THE ANNALS OF DIPLOMACY. I COMMENTED THAT IF THE SOVIETS WOULD SIMPLY COMPLY WITH THEIR COMMITMENTS THEY WOULD HAVE NO ACCESS PROBLEM.

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6. IN A QUIET EXCHANGE AFTER LUNCH, DOBRYNIN MILDLY UP-BRAIDED ME FOR MY INTERVIEW ON VOA WHICH HE SAID WAS BEING WIDELY PUBLICIZED IN THE AMERICAN PRESS WITH ARTICLES GENEROUSLY REPORTED BY HIS EMBASSY. HE STRESSED HIS CONVICTION THAT AMBASSADORS IN MOSCOW CAN MORE EFFECTIVELY BRING ABOUT AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS BY QUIET UNOBTRUSIVE BEHAVIOR AS WAS HIS PATTERN IN WASHINGTON. I TOLD DOBRYNIN THAT THERE WAS NO GREAT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN US AS TO OBJECTIVES AND I WOULD TAKE SECOND PLACE TO NONE IN MY DESIRE TO SEE AN IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WITH ATTENDANT INCREASE IN MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING. WITH REGARD TO THE LATTER, HE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT MY JOB IS SOMEWHAT MORE DIFFICULT THAN HIS, GIVEN THE CLOSED NATURE OF SOVIET SOCIETY. I HAD, FOR EXAMPLE, ON MANY OCCASIONS SOUGHT TO CORRECT DISTORTIONS AND FALSE ALLEGATIONS WITH REGARD TO MY GOVERNMENT'S POSITIONS AND POLICIES AIRED BY SOVIET MEDIA AND HAD BEEN SINGULARLY UNSUCCESSFUL IN GAINING AN ADEQUATE HEARING. IT WAS THEREFORE INCUMBENT UPON ME TO SEEK OTHER MEANS TO ENSURE THE SOVIET PUBLIC ACCESS TO OBJECTIVE INFORMATION BY OCCASIONALLY RESORTING TO THE ONLY MEANS AVAILABLE TO

ME--THE VOICE OF AMERICA. DOBRYNIN AT ONE POINT SAID
THAT I SHOULD KNOW THAT SOME OF MY COLLEAGUES IN
WASHINGTON HAD PASSED THE WORD TO SOVIET EMBASSY OFFICIALS
THAT MY REMARKS HAD NOT BEEN PROPERLY CLEARED--A
REVELATION WHICH I DID NOT FIND REASSURING. CLEARLY
DOBRYNIN AND HIS COLLEAGUES WOULD BE MUCH HAPPIER

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WITH AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR WHO ESCHEWED ALL PUBLIC
SPEAKING.

7. DOBRYNIN MADE NO COMMENT ON THE SHCHARANSKIY CASE,
AND I DID NOT RAISE THE ISSUE.

8. HE PLANS TO DEPART MOSCOW APRIL 7 AND WILL BE AT HIS
DESK ON MONDAY. HE PLANS TO RETURN TO MOSCOW PROBABLY
THE MONDAY BEFORE YOUR DEPARTURE IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE
IN YOUR TALKS WITH GROMYKO. TOON

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